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EPA

FACT SHEET

The Environmental and Health Benefits of the Final Pulp and Paper "Cluster Rule" and the Incentives Program

Summary

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is issuing final rules that will reduce and prevent water discharges and air emissions of dioxin and other toxic and hazardous pollutants by pulp, paper, and paperboard mills. These rules are being issued jointly under the Clean Water Act and the Clean Air Act and are commonly referred to as the "Cluster Rule."

Environmental and Health Benefits

The final "Cluster Rule" achieves significant reductions in the amount of pollutants in the wastewater discharged by the mills affected by this rule:

- 96% reduction in dioxin and furan
- 96% reduction in dioxin and furan loading to sludges (for land disposal)
- 99% reduction in chloroform

The final rule also calls for changes that significantly reduce the amount of pollutants that are emitted to the air from pulp and paper mills. These changes include:

- 59% reduction of all toxic air pollutants
- 47% reduction in reduced sulfur (the primary source of objectionable odors)
- 49% reduction in volatile organic compounds (precursors to smog)
- 37% reduction in particulate matter

Reducing the amount of pollutants released to the environment benefits public health and the environment:

- 73 rivers and streams become cleaner
- Ultimately, all dioxin fish consumption advisories associated with the 96 pulp and paper mills affected by this action will be eliminated

Incentives to Surpass Baseline Requirements

An important feature of this rule is a new program that encourages individual mills to install advanced pollution prevention technologies or make process changes that further reduce releases of pollutants beyond the limits set by this rule. By enrolling in this program, called the Advanced Technology Incentives Program, mills will be granted additional time to incorporate new technologies or change manufacturing processes in return for more advanced pollution prevention and protection controls.